President as early as the 3d of February. "Many verbal conferences ensued," as we are informed by General McClellan[1]; on the 14th the Secretary of War invited proposals for vessels; but it was not until the 27th that a decision was arrived at. That decision was in favor of McClellan's plan, and Mr. Tucker, the Assistant Secretary of War, was on that day authorized to collect the vessels needed for the transportation of the army. No formal order was issued; in fact, the order to move on Washington's birthday and the order directing the seizure of a point on the railroad southwestward of Manassas Junction were never formally rescinded; but McClellan was encouraged to suppose that his general plan had received the sanction of the Government, although its details had not been agreed upon.

The President, however, was not free from doubt in his own mind as to the correctness of his decision; and, early in March, he directed General McClellan to call a council of war, consisting of his division commanders. It met on the eighth of that month, and it voted by a majority of eight to four in favor of the movement on Urbana. It was determined also that the army should march to Annapolis, Maryland, and embark there, it being impossible for

the transports to run the enemy's batteries on the lower Potomac.[2]

The same day, the President issued another of his singular "orders," this one being Number 3.[3] The

[1] 5 W. R., 45, 46.
[2] Barnard's testimony, 1 C. W., 387 ; Sumner's testimony, «f.. 360.
[3] 5 W. R., 50.